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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NATO, XF
SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL CONSULTATIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST
MARCH 11, 1977

BEGIN SUMMARY:
MARCH 11 NAC CONSULTATION ON THE MIDDLE EAST REVEALED
GENREALLY CONVERGENT ALLIES VIEWS. ATTENTION FOCUSED

ON THE DESIRE BY COUNTRIES IN THE AREA TO MAKE A SERIOUS EFFORT THIS YEAR TO MOVE TOWARD A SETTLEMENT, THE PROBLEM OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION AS THE MAIN OBSTACLE TO RECONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, THE CENTRAL NEGOTIATING ROLE OF THE US, AND SOVIET VIEWS OF A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON DISCUSSED THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON AND NOTED THAT USG INTENDS TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN STIMULATING THE THINKING OF THE PARTIES AS NEW AVENUES LEADING TOWARD A SETTLEMENT ARE PURSUED. LOTHAR LAHN, ASSISTANT STATE SECRETARY, FRG FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND FRENCH PERMREP TINE BRIEFED THE COUNCIL ON THE RECENT VISITS TO THE MIDDLE EAST OF THEIR FOREIGN MINISTERS. RAYMOND TOMKYS, HEAD OF THE NEAR EAST DEPARTMENT AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE, ALSO PARTICIPATED IN WHAT WAS CONSIDERED TO BE A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL CONSULTATION. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING AN INTRODUCTION BY ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL PANSA, ATHERTON NOTED THAT THE COUNCIL MEETING WAS PARTICULARLY TIMELY. THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF A NUMBER OF THE ALLIED NATIONS HAD RECENTLY VISITED THE MIDDLE EAST AND THERE IS ALMOST UNIVERSAL ANTICIPATION IN THE AREA THAT 1977 WILL BE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT TO THE PEACEMAKING PROCESS. THE INTERESTS OF ALL THE ALLIES WILL BE AFFECTED, AND THE PARTIES TO THE CONFERENCE
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WILL BE ACTIVE IN NATO CAPITALS. THE US WILL BE PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE PEACEMAKING PROCESS. BOTH THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS WITH THE NATO ALLIES.

2. WITH REGARD TO SECRETARY VANCE'S TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST, ATHERTON POINTED OUT THAT AT THIS EARLY STAGE OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION THE VISIT HAD LIMITED BUT IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES:

--IT SIGNALLED THE PRESIDENT'S AND SECRETARY'S COMMITMENT TO WORK WITH THE GOVERNMENTS IN THE AREA FOR PROGRESS THIS YEAR ON A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT.

--IT WAS A FIRST STEP IN REVIVING THE NEGOTIATIONS.

--IT ALLOWED THE SECRETARY TO MEET PERSONALLY WITH LEADERS IN THE REGION AND TO ESTABLISH FIRM RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEM.

--IT ALSO ALLOWED THE SECRETARY TO HEAR IN DETAIL AND DIRECTLY THEIR VIEWS ON PROCEDURAL AND SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES AFFECTING A SETTLEMENT.

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3. DURING HIS TRIP, SECRETARY VANCE WAS ABLE TO COVER
SYSTEMATICALLY IN EACH CAPITAL THE SAME OUTLINE OF
PROCEDURAL AND SUBSTANTIVE POINTS, AND WAS THEREBY
ABLE TO COMPARE THE APPROACHES OF THE PARTIES. FROM
THIS ANALYTICAL PROCESS, WE CAN DRAW A NUMBER OF CON-
CLUSIONS:
--ARAB AND ISRAELI CONCEPTS RELATED TO A FINAL
SETTLEMENT ARE STILL VERY FAR APART, BUT THE
PARTIES ARE DETERMINED TO MAKE A SERIOUS EFFORT

THIS YEAR.

--THERE IS UNIVERSAL CONCERN AMONG THE MIDDLE EASTERN GOVERNMENTS ABOUT THE CRUSHING ECONOMIC BURDEN THE CONFLICT FORCES THEM TO BEAR. ALL ATTACH CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO THIS FACTOR AS ONE CONTRIBUTING TO THE NEED FOR A SETTLEMENT.

--THERE WAS CONSENSUS IN EACH CAPITAL THAT ALL THE PARTIES SHOULD WORK TO RECONVENE THE GENEVA MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE IN THE LATTER HALF OF 1977.

--ALL THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED WANT THE US TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE PROCESS. THEY RECOGNIZE THAT GROUNDWORK MUST BE LAID.

--THEY ALSO AGREED THAT IF PROCEDURAL PROBLEMS RELATED TO GETTING TO GENEVE COULD BE OVERCOME, THEY WOULD GO TO THE CONFERENCE WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS AS TO WHAT CAN BE TABLED FOR DISCUSSION.

4. IN THE MIDDLE EAST, THE US FOUND GENERAL AGREEMENT ON THE THREE MAIN SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES WHICH WOULD FORM THE BASIS OF AN AGENDA AT GENEVA:

- 1) THE NATURE OF PEACE;
- 2) THE QUESTION OF TERRITORIAL BOUNDARIES;
- 3) SETTLEMENT OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM.

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EACH OF THESE ISSUES ARE EQUAL IN IMPORTANCE AND ARE RELATED. THE QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IS THE PRINCIPAL OBSTACLE TO CONVENING GENEVA WHICH MUST BE OVERCOME.

5. ATHERTON THEN REVIEWED THE POSITION OF THE PARTIES, TURNING FIRST TO THE "PROCEDURAL" QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA:

--ISRAEL REMAINS QUITE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO PLO PARTICIPATION IN ANY FORM AT GNEEVA.

--ON THE ARAB SIDE, THERE IS STRONG FEELING THAT A WAY MUST BE FOUND ALLOWING FOR PLO PARTICIPATION. THE ARABS REALIZE IT IS A PROBLEM WHICH THEY THEMSELVES MUST GIVE CAREFUL ATTENTION TO RESOLVING IN CONSULTATIONS WITH THE PLO. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE QUESTION IS BEING DISCUSSED, AND WE ARE WAITING WITH SOME INTEREST TO SEE THE OUTCOME.

6. TURNING TO SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES, ATHERTON REVIEWED THE NATURE OF THE PEACE BEING SOUGHT BY THE PARTIES. ISRAEL IS SEEKING NORMAL RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS AS PART OF A SETTLEMENT. SUCH RELATIONS WOULD SERVE AS EVIDENCE THAT THE ARABS REALLY WANT PEACE, AND ISRAEL DESIRES CONCRETE MANIFESTATIONS OF ARAB INTENTIONS. IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY EGYPT AND SYRIA, THE VIEW WAS EXPRESSED THAT ENDING THE STATE OF WAR WAS EQUIVALENT TO ESTABLISHING A STATE OF PEACE. WITH REGARD TO "OPEN BORDERS", THE ARABS SAY THAT OPEN BORDERS ARE A

SOVEREIGN RIGHT OF GOVERNMENTS TO GRANT OR WITHHOLD AND SHOULD NOT BE SPELLED OUT IN A PEACH AGREEMENT ITSELF. HOWEVER, ARAB LEADERS DID NOT RULE OUT AN EVOLUTION TOWARD NORMAL RELATIONS FOLLOWING A SETTLEMENT.

7. ON THE QUESTION OF TERRITORIAL BOUNDARIES, THE US FOUND ISRAEL READY TO RETURN SOME TERRITORY AS PART OF A SETTLEMENT, BUT ISRAEL SEEKS TO RETAIN SOME TERRITORY TO HAVE "DEFENSIBLE BORDERS". THE ARABS CONTINUE TO BE OPPOSED TO ANY COMPROMISE ON THE PRINCIPLE OF A TOTAL SECRET

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ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, EXCEPT ON THE WEST BANK, WHERE KING HUSSEIN HAS SAID THAT ANY ADJUSTMENTS MUST BE "MINOR AND RECIPROCAL". THE US FOUND AN ARAB WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER A RANGE OF SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS SUCH AS EARLY WARNING STATIONS, SECURITY ZONES, AND INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES.

8. ON THE PALESTINE QUESTION, ISRAEL CONTINUES TO DESIRE THAT THERE BE NO INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE IN THE REGION. ON THE ARAB SIDE, WE FOUND CONSIDERABLE FLUIDITY, PARTICULARLY REGARDING THE LINKING OF A PALESTINIAN STATE AND JORDAN. IN EGYPT, JORDAN AND SYRIA, AT LEAST SOME THOUGHT IS BEING GIVEN TO THE CONCEPT OF LINKAGE.

9. REVIEWING THE PARTIES' THINKING ON THE FORM A GENEVA CONFERENCE MIGHT TAKE, ATHERTON OBSERVED.

--THE ISRAELIS DESIRE TO NEGOTIATE BILATERALLY AND SEE GENEVA AS A FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH SERIOUS BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS CAN TAKE PLACE.
--THE ARABS SEEM TO PREFER A MORE FORMAL CONFERENCE FORMAT WITH BILATERAL OR FUNCTIONAL SUBCOMMITTEES TO EXAMINE THE INDIVIDUAL ASPECTS OF THE SETTLEMENT.

10. ON THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE AREA, ATHERTON NOTED:
--ON THE ARAB SIDE, A MAJOR EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO ESTABLISH A COMMON FRONT AMONG THE MODERATE ARABS. THEY SAY THAT THEIR WILLINGNESS TO MAKE PEACE IS A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN THEIR OWN POSITIONS, AND NOW ISRAEL MUST MODIFY ITS POSITIONS ON THE QUESTIONS OF TERRITORY AND THE PALESTINIANS.
--THE US FOUND UNDERCURRENTS OF CONCERN IN THE ARAB WORLD THAT THE PEACE PROCESS MIGHT STALL AND THE COALITION OF MODERATES MIGHT DISINTEGRATE UNDER PRESSURE FROM RADICAL ELEMENTS.

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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--THE SAUDIS, AS A MAJOR FORCE IN HOLDING TOGETHER THE COALITION OF MODERATES, IN PARTICULAR FEAR THAT SUCH AN EVENTUALITY WOULD CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SOVIET UNION.

--THE ISRAELIS ARE STILL VERY DISTRUSTFUL OF ARAB STATEMENTS REGARDING PEACE; AND IT IS CLEAR THAT UNTIL THE MAY ELECTIONS AND THE FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT, WE CANNOT EXPECT ANY MAJOR DECISIONS RELATED TO PROCEDURES OR SUBSTANCE. BUT IT IS ALSO CLEAR TO THE ISRAELIS THAT WE CANNOT HAVE A YEAR WITHOUT ANY MOVEMENT.

11. ATHERTON THEN OUTLINED HOW THE UNITED STATES EVNISAGES THE PROCESS GOING FORWARD:

--PRESIDENT CARTER WILL BE MEETING WITH THE LEADERS OF THE STATES WHICH ARE PARTNERS TO THE NEGOTIATIONS AND WITH THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAUDI ARABIS.

--THESE MEETINGS WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CLARIFY FURTHER HOW THE GENEVA CONFERENCE CAN BE ORGANIZED AND TO DEFINE IN ADVANCE AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT.

--AN IMPORTANT FACTOR WILL BE WHATEVER WILL EMERGE IN THE ARAB WORLD REGARDING THE ROLE OF THE PALESTINIANS IN THE PEACE PROCESS.

--THE MODERATE ARABS CLEARLY CONSIDER ACTIVITY BETWEEN NOW AND THE RECONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE TO BE OF IMPORTANCE. SADAT, IN PARTICULAR, FEELS STRONGLY ABOUT THIS ISSUE.

--THE US DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THIS IS THE BEST TIME FOR DEBATE IN SUCH FORA AS THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL. WE ANTICIPATE A PERIOD OF ACTIVE CONSULTATIONS AT THE CHIEF-OF-STATE LEVEL AND IN DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS WITH THE MIDDLE EAST PARTIES, THE USSR, THE NATO ALLIES, AND SECRETARY SECRET

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GENERAL WALDHEIM. SECRETARY VANCE WILL DISCUSS THE MIDDLE EAST WHEN HE GOES TO MOSCOW LATER THIS MONTH.

--THE US HOPES THAT THIS PROCESS WILL STIMULATE FRESH THINKING ON HOW TO BRIDGE THE PROCEDURAL AND SUBSTANTIVE GAPS. PRESIDENT CARTER IN HIS MARCH 9 PRESS CONFERENCE DISCUSSED SOME ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO A NUMBER OF ISSUES DESIGNED TO STIMULATE THINKING.

12. ATHERTON MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS ABOUT THE RABIN VISIT:

--WE SEE IT AS ANOTHER STEP IN THE CONSULTATION PROCESS.

--THE PRESIDENT IS DETERMINED THAT HIS CONSULTATIONS WITH MIDDLE EAST LEADERS WILL ADVANCE THE NEGOTIATIONS. HE WISHES TO TALK ABOUT THE REAL ISSUES IN INCREASING DETAIL SO WE CAN BEGIN TO THINK IN PRACTICAL TERMS ABOUT THE BRIDGING PROCESS.

--WITH RABIN, THE PRESIDENT COVERED IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL ALL THE MAJOR ISSUES, INCLUDING PROCEDURAL ONES RELATED TO GENEVA, THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE COMMITMENTS AND TERRITORY, AND THE QUESTION OF THE PALESTINIANS.

--WE FOUND NO CHANGE IN ANY OF THE BASIC ISRAELI POSITIONS, BUT HAD NOT EXPECTED TO, GIVEN THE IMPENDING ELECTIONS.

--PRESIDENT CARTER DID NOT PUT FORWARD SPECIFIC US PROPOSALS AND PLANS, BUT THE DISCUSSION REANGED OVER A GREAT NUMBER OF POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO

THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS.

13. IN THE DISCUSSIONS WITH RABIN,
WE EXAMINED SUCH ISSUES AS WHETHER THE QUESTIONS OF
SOVEREIGNTY OVER TERRITORY
AND OF SECURITY CAN BE SEPARATED, HOW TO RELATE WITHDRAWAL
FROM TERRITORY TO THE ELEMENTS OF PEACE WHICH THE ISRAELIS SEEK,
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AND HOW TO RECONCILE ARAB INSISTENCE ON A POLITICAL ENTITY FOR THE
PALESTINIANS WITH THE ISRAELI DESIRE THAT THERE BE NO THIRD
STATE BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL. THE DISCUSSIONS
WITH RABIN WERE OF SUCH A NATURE THAT NO POTENTIAL
ALTERNATIVES WERE EXCLUDED. THE DISCUSSIONS
WERE DESIGNED TO STIMULATE FRESH THINKING. ATHERTON
POINTED OUT THAT THE SAME APPROACHES WOULD BE FOLLOW-
ED WITH ARAB LEADERS.

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14. PANSA THEN CALLED ON FRG ASSISTANT STATE SECRETARY LAHN, WHO SAID THAT HE HAD TRIED TO SUMMARIZE THE FRG'S IMPRESSIONS OF GENSHCE'S MIDDLE EAST GOALS IN A PAPER WHICH HE WOULD CIRCULATE.

15. LAHN SAID THAT THE RECENT VISITS TO THE MIDDLE EAST POINT TO CONSIDERABLE AGREEMENT ON THE NATURE OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IN THE AREA. THE ARABS WANT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, PARTICULARLY TO EASE THE ECONOMIC BURDEN IMPOSED ON THEM BY A STATE OF CONFLICT. THE MODERATE FRONT OF EGYPT, SYRIA, AND JORDAN APPEARS TO HAVE "CONSOLIDATED", AND COORDINATION AMONG THE THREE APPEARS TO BE IMPROVING. IN PARTICULAR, THERE IS INCREASINGLY CLOSE COORDINATION ON POLITICAL ASSESSMENTS BETWEEN CAIRO AND DAMASCUS.

16. CAIRO, DAMASCUS, AND AMMAN HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY DO NOT CONSIDER RECIPROCAL TERRITORIAL EXCHANGES TO BE RULED OUT, AND THEY AGREE A PALESTINAIN ENTITY SHOULD HAVE SOME KIND OF LINK WITH JORDAN. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE ARAB STATES ARE NOT IN AGREEMENT ON HOW THE PLO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN GENEVA. THE FRG BELIEVES THAT THE EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL FOR A JOINT JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN DELEGATION HAS BEEN MORE SYMPATHETICALLY RECEIVED IN THE ARAB WORLD THAN A SYRIAN PROPOSAL FOR AN ALL ARAB-PALESTINIAN DELEGATION. IF A JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN DELEGATION HAS GENERAL ARAB BACKING, BOTH JORDAN AND THE PLO WOULD BE PREPARED TO USE SUCH A FORMULA.

17. LAHN SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER WAS OPTIMISTIC IN TALKS WITH HIS GERMAN COUNTERPART, THERE WAS NO SIGN OF A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN THE PLO'S BASIC ATTITUDES. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT PLO LEADERS HAVE LAPSED INTO PREVIOUSLY HELD POSITIONS. ALSO, EVEN IF THE PALESTINIANS ARE PART OF ANOTHER DELEGATION, THE QUESTION OF WHETHER A SEPARATE INVITATION SHOULD
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BE SENT TO THE PLO REMAINS.

18. SYRIA SEEMS DETERMINED TO ASSURE THAT THE PLO IS DENIED ANY REMAINING SCOPE FOR MILITARY ACTIVITY. THE RECENT STATEMENTS BY PLO LEADERS REGARDING THE

PLO OBJECTIVE OF A GREATER PALESTINE CAN ONLY BE SEEN AS AN ATTEMPT TO MAKE THINGS DIFFICULT FOR THE ARAB STATES AND ARE PROBABLY TACTICAL RATHER THAN STRATEGIC. IF THIS TREND CONTINUES, HOWEVER, ISRAEL'S ATTITUDE WILL HARDEN AND GROUPS WITHIN ISRAEL SUPPORTING THE STATUS QUO WILL BE STRENGTHENED.

19. LAHN SAID THAT THE TALKS BETWEEN KING HUSSEIN AND ARAFAT WENT WELL, AND BOTH SEE THE NEED FOR A LINK BETWEEN JORDAN AND A FUTURE PALESTINIAN STATE. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PLO AND EGYPT SEEM EXCELLENT, AND ARAFAT KNOWS THAT BOTH THE EGYPTIANS AND THE SAUDIS EXPECT THE PLO TO ADOPT A MODERATE LINE. LAHN REITERATED THAT HE THOUGHT THE RECENT PLO WAS FOR TACTICAL PURPOSES.

20. LAHN SAID THAT IN THE FRG VIEW, ONE WAY TO INDUCE ISRAEL TO MAKE TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS WOULD BE TO PROVIDE GUARANTEES TO ISRAEL, ALTHOUGH THE LATTER WOULD PROBABLY NOT ACCEPT ANYTHING LESS THAN AN ISRAELI-US SECURITY AGREEMENT. SADAT TOLD GENSHER ON FEBRUARY 12 THAT HE WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO SUCH AN AGREEMENT.

21. LAHN SAID THAT IN THEORY IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO CONDUCT GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT THE PLO, BUT THIS WOULD ONLY PRODUCE A SUPERFICIAL AGREEMENT. AS LONG AS THE MAJORITY OF PALESTINIANS LIVE IN NEIGHBORING STATES, THEIR IRRIDENTISM WOULD CONTINUE, AND THEY WOULD THREATEN THE STABILITY OF ANY SETTLEMENT.

22. TINE (FRANCE) NOTED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER DE GUIRINGAUD HAD VISITED ARAB COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST FEBRUARY 16-23. HE HAD FOUND IN THE CONFRONTATION STATES A CONCERN THAT THE SURVIVAL OF THEIR GOVERNMENTS DEPENDS ON PROFITING FROM PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES TO SEEK A SETTLEMENT. THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S INTERLOCUTORS SHOWED REALISM AND MODERATION. CAIRO AND AMMAN,
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AND IMPLICITLY DAMASCUS, RECOGNIZED ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST. KHADDOUMI OF THE PLO WAS PREPARED FOR CREATION OF A STATE CONSISTING IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. THE ARAB LEADERS DENOUNCED THE INTRANSIGENCE OF ISRAEL, PARTICULARLY THE LATTER'S POSITION ON PLO PARTICIPATION IN GENEVA.

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23. TINE SAID THAT ALL OF THE STATES HIS FOREIGN MINISTER VISITED UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANT ROLE THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WOULD BE CALLED UPON TO PLAY. THE ARABS HOPE THAT THE US WILL BE ABLE TO LEAD ISRAEL TO A MORE FLEXIBLE POSITION. THEY ALSO HOPE THAT PERSISTENT EUROPEAN ACTION WILL HELP LEAD TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS. ALL SEEK A GLOBAL SETTLEMENT.

24. TINE SAID THAT JORDAN BELIEVES THAT AT GENEVA, THERE SHOULD BE COMMITTEES ON WITHDRAWAL, PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, AND GUARANTEES, RATHER THAN HAVING COMMITTEES ORGANIZED BY GEOGRAPHIC SECTORS.

25. TINE CONTINUED THAT FOR ALL THE ARABS, PLO PARTICIPATION IS NECESSARY, AND MUST BE SETTLED IN ADVANCE. THE ARAB STATES BELIEVE THAT THE PLO AND JORDAN COULD ESTABLISH MORE OR LESS FORMAL LINKS BEFORE THE CONFERENCE, ALTHOUGH THE POSSIBILITY OF A SINGLE ARAB DELEGATION ALSO HAS SUPPORTERS. IT IS CLEAR THAT JORDAN IS NOT WILLING TO TAKE RISKS IN THE CONFERENCE ALONE. TINE

OBSERVED THAT SOME ARAB LEADERS SEES SOME EVOLUTION IN PLO ATTITUDES COMING OUT OF THE MARCH 12 PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING BUT SUCH OPTIMISM DID NOT SEEM WELL FOUNDED.

26. TINE SAID THAT ALL THE ARAB LEADERS BELIEVED THAT A SETTLEMENT MUST INCLUDE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, A LINK BETWEEN JORDAN AND THE FUTURE PALESTINIAN STATE, INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES, AND CESSATION OF THE STATE OF BELLIGERENCE. IF GENEVA DOES NOT SUCCEED, THE ARABS WOULD WANT TO ASK THE SECURITY COUNCIL TO DECIDE CONDITIONS FOR A SETTLEMENT. EGYPT ALSO ENVISAGES AS A LAST RESORT CALLING A SPECIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING. IF THESE EFFORTS IN THE END DID NOT SUCCEED, THERE WOULD BE THE RISK OF A NEW WAR IN THE PROXIMATE FUTURE. TINE NOTED THAT SADAT HAD WELCOMED FRENCH PARTICIPATION IN EFFORTS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT.

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27. TINE ALSO NOTED THAT DE GUIRINGAUD WOULD AGAIN BE IN THE NEAR EAST BEFORE THE END OF THE MONTH TO VISIT ISRAEL. HE SAID THAT THE ABU DAUD AFFAIR WAS NOW CONSIDERED "DEPASSEE" BY BOTH SIDES, AND FRENCH-ISRAELI RELATIONS HAD RESUMED THEIR NORMAL COURSE. HE NOTED THAT FRANCE WOULD NOT ACCEPT THAT ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE BE PUT IN QUESTION, AND ISRAEL UNDERSTANDS THIS.

28. KILLICK (UK) EXPRESSED UK GRATITUDE FOR THE US, FRG, AND FRENCH CONTRIBUTIONS. HE NOTED THAT DOCTOR OWEN PROPOSES TO GO TO THE NEAR EAST WITHIN THE NEXT TWO OR THREE MONTHS. KILLICK SAID THAT HE WOULD AGREE WITH HIS FRENCH COLLEAGUE THAT WE ALL HAVE THE DUTY TO DO WHATEVER WE CAN TOWARD PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE SAID HE WISHED TO ASK AHERTON THREE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SOVIET ROLE FOLLOWING A SETTLEMENT. WOULD ISRAEL FIND SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN GUARANTEES ACCEPTABLE? GIVEN THE STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN MODERATE ARABS AND MOSCOW, WOULD THERE BE ANY PRESSURE FROM THE FORMER FOR SUCH A ROLE? IF THERE WERE NO SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN GUARANTEES, WOULD THE SOVIETS BE IN A POSITION TO SABOTAGE THE SETTLEMENT?

29. TOMKYS SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THE UK WOULD SHARE TO A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE THE ANALYSES WHICH HE HAD JUST HEARD. THE ANALYSES HAD EMPHASIZED THE DEGREE TO WHICH PARTICIPANTS TO THE DISPUTE ARE COMMITTED TO SERIOUS EFFORTS. HE NOTED THAT THE US ROLE IS ACCEPTED BY ALL SIDES AND IS INDISPENSABLE, AND HE WELCOMED THE US COMMITMENT IN THIS LEADING ROLE TO KEEP THE ALLIES FULLY INFORMED, SO THAT THEY WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO PLAY THEIR PART TOO WHEN THIS CAN BE DONE IN THE MOST HELPFUL WAY POSSIBLE.

30. TOMKYS SAID THE UK AGREED THAT AT THIS STAGE NO USEFUL PURPOSE WOULD BE SERVED BY A SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE. THE UK HAD FOUND PRESIDENT CARTER'S REMARKS AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE VERY INTERESTING,

AND HE ASKED ATHERTON TO WHAT EXTEND THE US HAD AL-
READY EXPLORED THE PRESIDENT'S IDEAS WITH
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THE ARABS? THE INITIAL ARAB REACTION IN LONDON WAS
SKEPTICAL. RE THE SOVIET POSITION, THE UK HAD A
REPORT FROM MOSCOW THAT THE SOVIETS ARE TALKING OF A
SETTLEMENT GUARANTEED BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL, ALTHOUGH
THEY FIND THE PRESENCE OF CHINA IN THAT BODY A COMPLI-
CATING FACTOR. THUS THEY MAY BE THINKING OF A GUARANTEE
BY PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL EXCEPT
CHINA. THEY MAY ALSO THINK THAT THE FORM OF THESE
GUARANTEES SHOULD BE DISCUSSED AT GENEVA.

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TRSE-00 USIA-01 IO-06 /068 W
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P R 120314Z MAR 77
FM USMISSION NATO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2166
INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS PRIORITY 6905
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USDOCOSOUTH
USNMR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANAA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USINT BAGHDAD

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31. CATALANO (ITALY-DEAN OF PERMREPS) NOTED ITALY'S INTEREST AS A MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRY, AND ITALY'S APPRECIATION FOR THE THREE REPORTS AT THIS MEETING. HE SAID THAT THE ITALIAN VIEW COINCIDES WITH THAT STATED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE EC-9 COUNCIL. HE SAID HE WISHED TO ASK ATHERTON THREE QUESTIONS. FIRST, AMONG THE ALTERNATIVES FOR RECONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WHICH ATHERTON HAD SPOKEN OF, IS THERE ONE WHICH THE US SEES AS POSSIBLY MAKING THE MOST HEADWAY WITH THE ARABS? SECOND, SADAT HAD TOLD SOME VISITORS THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT THE PRESENCE OF UN FORCE IN EGYPT, AS WELL AS A MILITARY PACT BETWEEN THE US AND ISRAEL. CATALANO SAID HE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN WASHINGTON THINKING. THIRD, WHAT COULD ATHERTON SAY ABOUT THE SHAPE OF A POSSIBLE FUTURE PALESTINIAN STATE?

32. RE CATALANO'S QUESTION ON ALTERNATIVES FOR RECONVENING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, ATHERTON SAID HE ASSUMED THAT THIS REFERRED TO WAYS OF DEALING WITH THE PLO REPRESENTATION ISSUE. THIS DEPENDED ON WHAT CAME OUT OF THE DEBATE AMONG THE ARABS AND WITH THE PLO. THE PRESENT PLO POSITION IS A MAJOR IF NOT INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLE. WORKING OUT A FORMULA DEPENDS ON MODIFICATION OF THAT POSITION. THAT WILL BE THE PRINCIPAL FOCUS OF ARAB EFFORTS WITH THE PLO, AND THE US IS AWAITING THE OUTCOME WITH GREAT INTEREST. WE ARE OPEN-MINDED ON THE QUESTION OF THE FORMULA.

33. RE THE QUESTION ON A PALESTINIAN STATE, ATHERTON SAID THE US HAD AVOIDED TAKING A POSITION ON THE NATURE OF A PALESTINIAN SETTLEMENT AND HAS NOT FORECLOSED ANY RESULTS AGREED BY THE PARTICIPANTS THEMSELVES.

34. RE THE QUESTION ON GUARANTEES, OPENMINDEDNESS
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REGARDING INTERNATIONAL FORCES HAS LONG BEEN A POSITION OF SADAT, BUT EVEN SYRIA WAS NOW WILLING TO TALK ABOUT IT.

35. RE THE UK QUESTION ON THE SOVIET ROLE IN GUARANTEES, ATHERTON SAID ISRAEL WOULD NOT ATTACH CREDENCE TO A GUARANTEE INVOLVING THE SOVIETS. REGARDLESS OF WHETHER ISRAEL WOULD FLATLY

REJECT SUCH A GUARANTEE, ISRAEL WOULD NOT REGARD IT AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR OTHER MEANS OF ASSURING ITS SECURITY. ISRAEL ATTACHES THE MOST IMPORTANCE TO TERRITORY, AND TO ISRAEL'S OWN DEFENSE EFFORTS. THEY ARE NOT ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT A BILATERAL PACT WITH THE US, AND THIS IS NOT SOMETHING WHICH THE US OR ISRAEL HAS PROPOSED.

36. HARDY (CANADA) ASKED ATHERTON THREE QUESTIONS:

-- ON LEAVING ISRAEL DURING HIS RECENT ME TRIP, SECRETARY VANCE WAS QUOTED AS HAVING BEEN ENCOURAGED BY ISRAELI FLEXIBILITY. WHAT FORMS DID THIS FLEXIBILITY TAKE?
-- ISRAELI GOVERNMENT SOURCES HAVE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT SECRETARY VANCE WENT BEYOND SECRETARY KISSINGER'S STATED CRITERIA FOR PLO PARTICIPATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATING PROCESS (I.E., RECOGNITION OF THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL AND READINESS TO ABIDE BY SC RESOLUTIONS 338 AND 242). SECRETARY VANCE HAD REPORTEDLY ADDED TO THESE THE CRITERION OF RENUNCIATION BY THE PLO OF THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL CHARTER, AND HARDY ASKED IF SUCH AN ADDITIONAL CRITERION WAS AN ACCURATE REFLECTION OF THE US POSITION AND WHETHER IT WAS REALISTIC.
-- COULD ATHERTON PROVIDE MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE DISTINCTION DRAWN IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE BETWEEN RECOGNIZED BORDERS AND DEFENSE LINES? WAS THIS MATTER DISCUSSED
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DURING PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S WASHINGTON VISIT?

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INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS PRIORITY 6906
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USNMR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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37. ATHERTON REPLIED THAT, AS REGARDS ISRAELI FLEXIBILITY, SECRETARY VANCE HAD FOUND THAT THE ISRAELIS RECOGNIZE THE NEED TO GET THINGS MOVING THIS YEAR, THOUGH HE HAD DETECTED NO CHANGE IN ISRAELI POSITIONS ON BASIC ISSUES. THE CHANGE WAS RATHER IN THE ISRAELIS' STATE OF MIND AND IN THE RECOGNITION OF THE NEED TO MOVE DECISIVELY AFTER THE MAY ELECTIONS. WITH RESPECT TO THE PLO, THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN THE BASIC US POSITION. IT IS TRUE THAT SECRETARY VANCE HAD SAID THAT A MODIFICATION OF THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL CHARTER WOULD BE A HELPFUL STEP, BUT HE HAD NOT POSED SUCH A MEASURE AS A PRECONDITION FOR CONSIDERING A CHANGE IN THE US ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PLO. AS REGARDS THE CONCEPT OF A DISTINCTION BETWEEN SOVERIGN BORDERS AND DEFENSE LINES ENUNCIATED BY THE PRESIDENT, THIS MATTER HAD BEEN TOUCHED ON ALTHOUGH IT HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED IN DETAIL DURING THE RABIN VISIT.

ATHERTON FURTHER NOTED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD ALSO SAID HE WAS NOT SEEKING TO PUT FORTH A US PLAN OR TO PREDISPOSE THE US ATTITUDE TOWARD THE DETAILS OF AN AGREEMENT, WHICH MUST BE NEGOTIATED BY THE PARTIES.

38. TINE (FRANCE) ASKED WHETHER THE PRESIDENT'S CONCEPT OF A DISTINCTION BETWEEN SOVEREIGN BORDERS AND DEFENSE LINES WAS COMPATIBLE WITH THE NOTION OF GUARANTEES.

ATHERTON REPLIED HE DID NOT THINK THE PRESIDENT WAS SEEKING TO EXCLUDE ANY PARTICULAR FORMULAS AND THAT VARIOUS COMBINATIONS WERE POSSIBLE WHICH COULD INCLUDE SUCH CONCEPTS AS GUARANTEES AND INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCES.

39. BUSCH (NORWAY) SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT, IF THERE WERE NO PROGRESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE,
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EGYPT MIGHT SEEK RECOURSE TO HE UNGA UNDER THE UNITING FOR PEACE RESOLUTION. ATHERTON SAID THE US HAD NOT CONSIDERED THIS POSSIBILITY, WHICH HARDLY SEEMED A REALISTIC FORUM FOR NEGOTIATING A SETTLEMENT, AND WAS TRYING TO KEEP THE FOCUS ON GETTING REAL NEGOTIATIONS STARTED BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

40. PANSAS ASKED WHETHER THE RECENT HUSSEIN/ARAFAT MEETING BROUGHT ANY NEW ELEMENTS INTO THE PICTURE. ATHERTON RESPONDED THAT HE HAD NOT RECEIVED ANY DETAILED ACCOUNTS OF THE MEETING, BUT IT DID SEEM TO BE PART OF A GENERAL EFFORT BY ARAB GOVERNMENTS TO BRIDGE THE GAP ON PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT. LAHN COMMENTED THAT IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO SEE WHAT DECISIONS THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL WILL TAKE AT ITS MARCH 12 MEETING. LAHAN BELIEVED THAT ARAFAT MAY NOT BE AS RELUCTANT AS OTHER ELEMENTS IN THE PLO TO ESTABLISH THINKING SEEMS TO BE DIRECTED TOWARD THE BUILDING OF CLOSE LINKS WITH JORDAN.

41. PANSAS ASKED WHETHER THE VARIOUS VIEWS EXPRESSED BY DIFFERENT PLO PERSONALITIES REPRESENTED REAL DIFFERENCES OR SIMPLY AN "AGREED DISTRIBUTION OF ROLES". ATHERTON SAID HE BELIEVED THERE WERE DIFFERING PLO VIEWPOINTS AND THE RESULT OF SUCH A DEBATE IS USUALLY TO PRODUCE A LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR. WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT TOO MUCH FROM THE PRESENT PLO MEETING, BUT THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THE END OF THE STORY FOR, IN ATHERTON'S VIEW, INTERNAL PLO DEBATE WILL CONTINUE.

42. KILLICK NOTED THAT THE NATO MIDDLE EAST EXPERTS REPORT -- WHICH THE COUNCIL WILL DISCUSS AT ONE OF ITS LATER MEETINGS -- PREDICTS THAT THE ISRAELI ELECTIONS ARE UNLIKELY TO RESULT IN A STRONG GOVERNMENT WITH CLEAR MANDATE. ATHERTON SAID THIS WAS PROBABLY A REALISTIC ASSESSMENT, AND A COALITION GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO EMERGE FROM THE
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ELECTIONS. SUCH A GOVERNMENT, IN REFINING ITS APPROACH TO MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS, WOULD NEED TO MAKE COMPROMISES

AMONG THE VIEWPOINTS OF THE PARTNERS IN THE COALITION, BUT THIS SHOULD NOT LEAD US TO ASSUME THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL BE INCAPABLE OF COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE BASIC ME ISSUES. TOMKYS COMMENTED THAT THE CHANCES FOR A NEW ISRAELI COALITION GOVERNMENT TO BE ABLE TO MAKE THE NECESSARY DECISIONS WOULD BE BETTER THAN THE CHANCES AT PRESENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, A COALITION GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO MAKE THE NECESSARY DECISIONS WOULD OF COURSE BE LESS THAN THAT OF A STRONG MAJORITY GOVERNMENT.

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AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
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43. BUWALDA (NETHERLANDS CHARGE) RECALLED THAT ATHERTON HAD SAID THAT SOME ARAB COUNTRIES WERE TALKING ABOUT THE SETTING UP OF ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE DEVICES ALONG THE BORDERS WITH ISRAEL AS PART OF A SETTLEMENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE ISRAELIS CLAIM TO BE SEEKING OPEN BORDERS. DID ATHERTON SEE ANY CONTRADICTION? ATHERTON REPLIED THAT WE CAN LOOK ON THESE TWO VIEWS AS COMPATIBLE; WHILE THE ISRAELIS DESIRE OPEN BORDERS AS AN ELEMENT IN A SOLUTION, ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE COULD PLAY A ROLE IN THE EVENT THAT THOSE BORDERS WERE THREATENED.

44. IN CONCLUDING THE MEETING, PANSKY EXPRESSED HIS THANKS TO THE US, FRG, UK AND FRANCE FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS AND SAID THAT HIS MEETING HAD BEEN A VERY GOOD EXAMPLE OF ALLIANCE CONSULTATIONS. STRAUSS-KHAN

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